DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 115 HE 015 458

AUTHOR Rutledge, Mark; Haymes, Steven
TITLE Student Perceptions of Religion and Campus. (A Survey: Fall Semester, 1981.)
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Churches; *College Students; Higher Education; *Religion; Religious Organizations; *Student Attitudes; Student Interests; *Student Participation
IDENTIFIERS Campus Ministry; *University of New Mexico

ABSTRACT

Perceptions and attitudes of University of New Mexico (UNM) students regarding the university, their church, and the campus ministry were surveyed in fall 1981 through telephone interviews. All of the 40 students were affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Most students (82.5 percent) were members of some church, and most attended one or more times per month. Of these, nearly one-third were involved in church activities in addition to attendance at worship. Students seemed to participate far less in any campus extracurricular organized activities than they did in church. For example, only 30 percent reported involvement in any organized campus activities, and of these only 7.5 percent were involved in religious activities. Many students attended church for reasons of social habit or out of a need for some kind of group affiliation. Many of the students saw themselves as being quite religious. On a scale of 1-10, most students ranked themselves 5, and a strong majority (62.5 percent) ranked themselves 7 or above. However, they perceived other students as being less religious than they were. Forty-five percent reported that their church involvement had decreased since beginning college, mainly because of being busy with school. Students in the sample were largely freshmen and sophomores, half lived on campus, while only about 5 percent of UNM students overall live on campus. All of those reporting a change in their religious attitudes since beginning college indicate some change in a positive direction; they experienced a strengthening of religious attitude because of personal experiences, or they had become more tolerant of others. A sample questionnaire and responses and a newsletter article on the research are appended. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED221115

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF RELIGION AND CAMPUS

(A Survey: Fall Semester, 1981)

Mark Rutledge & Steven Haymes

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mark Rutledge

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

AE 015 452

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY

A Ministry in Higher Education at the University of New Mexico

1801 Las Lomas, N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87106 Phone 247-0497

Director:
MARK RUTLEDGE, *M. Div., Ed. D.*

Program Coordinator:
REX STEWART, *B.A.*

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF RELIGION AND CAMPUS

(A survey: Fall Semester, 1981)

by Mark Rutledge & Steven Haymes

This fall semester we conducted telephone interviews with 40 UNM students to determine their perceptions and attitudes regarding the University, their church, and the campus ministry. We identified them from religious preference lists we received from UNM, and from local churches from which we requested names of their student members. All of these students were affiliated with the United Methodist Church. One purpose of these interviews was to begin to gather hard data regarding what students themselves perceive.

Another purpose of the survey was to reach out to students, let them know we care, invite them to our ministry programs, and request their help in understanding their concerns and needs. Almost no students refused to be interviewed, in fact when we asked them how they felt about being called they responded very positively. Many students said they were glad we called, that it showed we cared.

The results are tabulated on the following pages. Simple tabulations are reported in numbers and percentages following the numbered questions. Open-ended questions calling for individual responses are reported in the second section. The reader is invited to draw his/her own conclusions from these data. In looking over the answers the following observations seemed interesting to us:

1. Most students (82.5%) are members of some church, and most attend one or more times per month. Of these, nearly one-third are involved in church activities above and beyond simple attendance at worship. This suggests that many students, while they attend college, look to their own church for religious involvement, and that therefore the local parish has an important role to play in "campus ministry."

2. Students seem to participate far less in <u>any</u> campus extra-curricular organized activities than they do in church! For example, only 30% reported involvement in any organized campus activities, and of these only 3 (7.5%) were involved in religious activities. This finding confirms a similar observation of the UNM Office of Institutional Research that UNM students do not strongly identify with or personally invest in their educational experience on the main campus.

3. Why do students go to church? In looking at the responses to this question, it seemed to us that many students attend for reasons of social habit and desireability, or out of a need for some kind of group "affiliation." It seemed significant to us that not one student gave as a reason for liking their church that it helped them with their own spiritual growth or religious search.

Disciples of Christ • United Church of Christ • United Methodist Church • United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

4. We were somewhat surprised to observe that many students see themselves as being quite religious. On a scale of 1-10 most students ranked themselves above 5, and a strong majority (62.5%) ranked themselves 7 or above. However, they perceived other students as being less religious than they are. On the same scale, 16 students (40%) ranked their fellow/sister students as 5 or less. And at the top of the scale there were far fewer 9 and 10 responses for other students.

5. A significant number (45%) reported that their church involvement had decreased since beginning college. Of this number, most said that "being busy with school" was the most significant cause. This is the same answer that many students gave for the question of why students generally do not attend campus religious activities.

6. Demographically, the students in this sample are not typical of students at UNM in the following ways: (1) they are younger, clustering in the freshman and sophomore ranges; (2) half of our sample live on campus, as compared to the fact that only about 5% of UNM students in general live on campus.

7. Demographically, they are typical in the following ways: (1) 70% of our sample work, and most of them more than 10 hours; (2) 77% of our sample have used some campus student services, mostly financial aid and the health service; (3) 75% say they have made a career choice, but are only "somewhat" definite about it; and (4) 70% do not participate in any campus organized group activities. This latter fact may well explain our experience that students do not participate in organized religious activities either.

8. It was a surprise to us to learn that only 32% of the students could recall receiving our newspaper, the Prophet, because all of the students we call are in fact on our mailing list and get it. Why? Do they pitch it in the nearest circular file; do they not know who it is from? This does not jibe with the positive reactions we have received from many students and faculty about the Prophet. We will try to explore this seeming discrepancy in our Spring semester survey.

9. All of those reporting a change in their religious attitudes since beginning college indicate some change in a positive direction, that it has been strengthened because of personal experiences, or that they are more tolerant of others. More than one-fourth of the students reported such a change. It seemed to the interviewer that most students did not connect spiritual growth & church attendance.

CONCLUSIONS. At this time we are not prepared to draw further conclusions from these data. The reader is invited to make his/her own inferences from the information contained here. We welcome reactions, comments, suggestions, etc. Next semester we will be conducting further interviews in order to be able to make additional comparisons and observations. We do feel, however, that it is very important for campus ministry to gather such data, otherwise planning is done with insufficient information about the population one is attempting to serve.

For circled O open-ended questions, see 2nd section for tally of responses

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES
STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Students = 40

Name: _____ Denomination all United Methodist Date Fall Semester 81

Address: _____ Phone _____

A. U.N.M. GENERAL

Freshmen - 14; Sophmore - 18; Jr. - 5; Sr. - 3

1. How many semesters (or credits) have you completed at the University? _____

2. Are you 1 (2.5%) graduate or 39 (97.5%) undergrauate?

3. Are you living on or off campus? 20 (50%) On 13 (32.5%) Off 7 (17.5%) (Parents' home)

4. Married 1 (2.5%) Unmarried 39 (97.5%)

(5.) If off campus, how far from campus? _____

(6.) Do you work? 28 (70%) yes 12 (30%) no (If yes, how many hours? _____

7. Have you made a career choice? 30 (75%) yes 10 (25%) no

8. If yes, how definite is that choice? 20 (58.8%) very 14 (41.1%) somewhat ____ not at all

(9.) What do you like about UNM?

(10.) What would you change about UNM?

11. Do you participate in any organized campus activities, religious or other wise? 12 (30%) yes 28 (70%) no

(12.) If yes, which ones? _____

13. Have you used any campus student services for help, for example, personal counseling, career services, academic, financial aid, or health concerns? 31 (77.5%) yes 9 (22.5%) no

If yes, which ones? Academic 5; Personal Counseling 3; Financial aid 24; Career 2; health concerns 18

(14.) Are there any areas where you would like more help from the University? 11 (27.5%) yes 29 (72.5%) no

If yes, specify: _____

B. RELIGION/CHURCH GENERAL

15. Are you a member of a church? 33 (82.5%) yes 7 (17.5%) no

16. If yes, name of church & town "omit"

17. How often do you attend church worship services during the school year?

(x = monthly) 5 none; 4 2x; 4 3x; 8 4x; 3 1x - 2x; 6 1x; 3 2x - 3x.

(18.) Are you involved in any other church activities? 13 (32.5%) yes 27 (67.5%) no

If yes, specify: _____

19. Where do you usally attend church? 31 attend the church of which they are a member; 2 attend other church other than their regular churc

(20.) If you attend a church, why do you go to that particular church: What do you like most about it: _____

21. If you do not attend a church, why not? 1 atheist; 4 not interested

22. Has there been a change in the level of your church involvement since you became a student at UNM? 3 (7.5%) increase 18 (45%) decrease 19 (47.5%) same

(23.) What factors may be involved here?

24 Overall, would you say you have undergone any major changes in religious attitude since beginning college? 11 (27.5%) yes 29 (72.5%) no

(25.) If yes, in what way?

(26.) Do you think there are ways in which the organized church is succeeding or failing to do the job it should? 9 both succeeding & failing
12 don't know

Succeeding 12

Failing 4

(27.) On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is religion to you now?

(28.) On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is religion to other students you know?

C. UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY: SPECIFIC

29. Have you heard of United Campus Ministry? 35 (87.5%) yes 5 (12.5%) no

30. Do you know where U.C.M. is located? 15 (37.5%) yes 25 (62.5%) no (If no, tell them.)

31. Have you ever received any information from U.C.M.? 16 (40%) yes 24 (60%) no

32. Have you ever received The Prophet? 13 (32.5%) yes 27 (67.5%) no

33. If no, would you like us to send you our next edition? 22 (55%) yes 18 (45%) no

34. Would you like to be on our mailing list to receive information? 20 (50%) yes 20 (50%) no

(35.) Students generally do not attend campus religious activities. What do you think may be the reasons for that?

(36.) What kinds of programs would you be interested in seeing U.C.M. sponsor?

37. Tell them about upcoming programs. (optional)

38. Would you be interested in checking out any of the programs at UCM? 22 (57.5%) yes 17 (42.5%) no

39. How do you feel about this phone call? 40 OK; hope it's helpful

40. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about religion at UNM? no 40 (100%)

UCM Student Survey
Answers to open-ended questions

5. If living off campus, how far from campus?

3 1/2 mile
6 1 to 4 miles
6 5 to 8 miles
3 9 to 12 miles
0 12 to 16 miles
2 17 to 20 miles

6. If working, how many hours weekly?

0 5 to 10 hours
14 10 to 15 hours
10 20 to 25 hours
2 25 to 30 hours
0 30 to 35 hours
2 35 to 40 hours

9. What do you like about UNM?

2 people
T students are nice
11 location
7 size
T multicultural aspects
T live History Dept.
T atmosphere, location, students & professors
T large facilities, size
T lots of friends & good Business School
2 good Sociology Dept. & professors
1 good program structure
T honor program, economic program, friends
2 design of campus
T (fraternities) Greek system
T sports events
T close to home
1 dorm life
T music program
6 don't know

10. What would you change about UNM?

1 UNM asks for too much personal information
1 too many stairs in buildings
13 size, (too big)
4 needs better instructors & professors
T needs more parking spaces, & more programs for younder students doing good instead of for bad students
2 professors need to be more personal with students
1 needs smaller classes
T finals, also one test shouldn't carry so much weight
1 need more academic structured programs
T La Posada food (dorm cafeteria)
T Jesus freaks on corner
T too much buracracy
9 don't know

12. Which organized campus activities do you participate in?

1 Economic Student Council
T band
T Intermurals
T Presidental Scholars Club
2 Chorus
2 Campus Crusades for Crist
T active member in Baptist Student Union
T Treasurer for History Honors Society
T Kenya Student Organization

14. What areas would you like more help from the University?

1 Library
5 getting me a job after graduation
T burecratic staff employees are very dehumanizing to students
1 health clinic needs improvement
T turn down finanical aid
2 counceling dept. needs improvement

18. What church activities are you involved in?

27 none
1 youth sponsor
3 young adult group
1 MYF program
1 church chorus & play piano
5 church chorus
1 bible study

20. What do you like most about the particular church you attend?

2 preacher
8 have many friends, like service
18 gone there all my life, parents go there
3 people are nice
1 husband is comfortable with church
5 don't go to church
1 because it's close
1 like to go listen
1 haven't really thought about it
1 dislike particular church because of its social hypocricy, but attend anyway
1 invested alot of time in church, feel loyalty to church
5 don't know

23. What factors are involved in any changes in your church involvement since you became a student at UNM?

Decreased factors

13 busy with school
1 away from home
1 husband disability
2 dissatisfaction with minister
0 don't know

Increased factors

2 look to church for guidance because of life's experiences

Factors same

1 always had devotion to church
1 because I live in Albuq. and my parents go there
2 studies take up too much time
1 studies & sorority takes too much time
1 church is a show case, don't need to go to church in order to believe in God
2 never been interested in church
1 don"t believe in God
1 haven't been interested in church
8 don"t know

25. In what way have you undergone any major changes in religious attitude since you became a student at UNM?

10 strengthened because of personal experiences
1 more tolerant of others

26. How do you think the organized church is succeeding or failing to do the job it should?

Succeeding

1 good turnout & activities at church
3 alot more people are going
5 gives support
5 said church is succeeding, but gave no further comment

Failing

1 churches are competing against one another instead of working together
1 too commercial
3 churches seems to be fatalistic, instead of optimistic
1 doesn't really address social issues
1 alienates people

Church is both succeeding & failing

1 it's a beginning - succeeding
it doesn't reach-out - failing
1 family activities makes people
come close together - succeeding
excludes people who are not active -
failing
1 responsibility rest on minister to
make church - succeeding
too ritual, not enough fellowship,
depersonalizes God - failing
1 helps keep kids out of trouble - succeedir
not getting as many members as they
should - failing
1 keeps me going - succeeding
high school groups are a clique, and
not open enough - failing
3 said both succeeding & failing but
gave no further comment

12 didn't know

27. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is religion to you now?

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Students	1			2	9	3	7	5	6	7

28. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is religion to other students you know?

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Students	2		2	6	6	6	5	4	4	2	3

35. What do you think may be the reasons students generally do not attend campus religious activities?

15 real busy with school
1 too pushy
2 not a priority
1 away from home
9 peer pressure
4 not interested
1 personal reasons
1 change of personal beliefs
1 maybe they would if they got to
know the people at UCM
1 not stylish anymore
1 tired of being preached at
1 students experience new freedoms
besides religious activities
2 already involved with own church
6 don't know

36. What kinds of programs would you be interested in seeing U.C.M. sponsor?

2 need to make itself more known
6 bible study
1 should try to have programs which
can bring people together, instead
of religious programs
2 fellowships & lectures
1 music programs, volunteer work,
slide shows (films)
1 picnics
1 planned get togethers
1 big brother program
1 I don't know, but I don't like those
people who go around the sub yelling
that you are going to hell if you
don't listen to the words of God
1 parties
1 world hunger, social concerns, raising
money for good causes
17 don't know because I'm not "involved"
in program

In a final cluster of questions in which they were asked to identify major issues confronting students on campus, responses were obtained under 6 general areas as follows:

1. Education. The most important concern about education was financial--the rising costs of education and budget cuts. Second was concern about a decline in quality of their education, e.g., quality of professors, apathetic professors. All responses follow:

- 10 budget cuts/money/financial aid
- 4 quality of professors
- 3 apathetic professors
- 5 choices of classes
- 2 pressure to finish education
- 2 pace planning
- 2 local high schools don't equip students for college
- 1 self discipline
- 1 Communication Skills Test is an elitist way of weeding people out of UNM
- 1 is education sufficient, does it really serve the community's interests?
- 1 size of classes
- 1 deciding whether to stay in school
- 4 don't know

2. Family Life. Gaining independence from their family was a major concern in this area. All responses follow:

- 7 independence from family
- 4 openness and togetherness
- 3 not enough interaction between family members
- 3 parents demand too much
- 1 family is giving more support
- 3 students not spending enough time at home
- 2 homesickness
- 2 lack of any family life
- 1 not enough communication
- 2 improved for most students
- 8 don't know

3. Career Decisions. Many choices create confusion was the most important concern, followed by lack of jobs and getting a high paying job after graduation. Some students feel that it is a heavy responsibility to make a job choice. All responses follow:

- 12 too many choices creates confusion
- 6 lack of jobs
- 6 getting a high paying job after grad.
- 4 feel heavy responsibility to make a job choice
- 3 will job meet personal satisfaction
- 2 students choose jobs for the money and not for the interest
- 1 misinformation people give
- 2 students need to set reachable goals
- 1 how to get money and fast
- 5 don't know

4. Social Life/Peer Pressure. A major concern in this area had to do with drug abuse, and pressure to conform to peer expectations. All responses follow:

- 6 drug abuse
- 5 conforming to status quo
- 4 pressure by peers to have a good time
- 3 having a good time instead of study
- 2 inferiority complex
- 2 lack of social life
- 2 its great
- 1 men & women are too sexually permissive
- 1 deciding when to get married
- 12 don't know

5. Religion. A major concern about religion is that people seem to be afraid to show their religious side or be too vulnerable about this aspect of their lives. It seems to be socially undesireable to appear to be too religious, people fear criticism. A second concern relates to being turned off by aggressive, fundamentalist evangelicals. One problem for how UCM is perceived by students lies in this area--many students wondered if we weren't representing those "shouting preachers who damn everybody to hell." All responses follow:

- 4 people are embarrased to talk about their religion
- 3 people are skeptical of you if you have religious beliefs
- 2 people will criticize you if you go to church or believe in God
- 4 those people on the Mall give a bad name to religion
- 2 students leave home and lose interest
- 2 hypocrisy of the church
- 3 lack of committment
- 1 shouldn't let Moral Majority influence school curriculum
- 1 many feel they don't get anyt' ng out of it
- 1 don't understand why anybody goes to church
- 13 don't know

6. Politics. The top concern was the draft, followed by concern for Reagan's politics and unemployment. Many cited apathy. All responses follow.

- 9 draft
- 6 Reagan's politics
- 5 unemployment
- 8 apathy of students to politics
- 4 students need to be involved
- 4 economic failure
- 2 threat of war
- 2 Russians may start war
- 2 don't need Jerry Falwell
- 1 students don't exercise their voting rights enough
- 1 shouldn't have gotten rid of Carter
- 6 don't know

A Publication of the United Campus Ministry at the University of New Mexico
August - September, 1982 Volume 2, Issue 3

NEW RESEARCH: RELIGIOUS STUDENTS LESS TOLERANT?

By Mark Rutledge & Mitchell Levick

UNM students in churches affiliated with United Campus Ministry express high degrees of conventional religious beliefs and behaviors. At the same time they tend to score relatively high on measures of dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, and authoritarianism. These are two preliminary results of a study conducted by Mitchell Levick, graduate student in the Department of Psychology, in which UCM collaborated last Spring semester.

We obtained responses from 59 students, out of 280 to whom we sent questionnaires. Considering the fact that we sent them out a few weeks before final exams, this positive response rate (21%) may be considered fairly high.

The vast majority of students endorsed traditional credal beliefs. For example, 51 students (86%) said that they believe that Christ is a living reality. 85% believe that the Word of God is revealed in the Scriptures, and 90% believe that God revealed Himself to man in Jesus Christ. 88% believe in eternal life and 92% that God is a heavenly Father who watches over them and to whom they are accountable. A high number (67%) say that they believe honestly and wholeheartedly in the doctrines and teachings of the Christian church.

cont. on page 8

page 8
cont. from page 1

When asked about their private devotional life, 66% of the students said that private prayer was one of the most important and satisfying aspects of their religious experience. 68% said that they frequently feel very close to God in prayer, during public worship, or at important moments in their daily lives. When asked how often they pray privately in places other than at church, 39% said "regularly," 15% said "fairly frequently," 30% said "occasionally," and 15% said "seldom or never."

The students in our sample were selected randomly from religious preference lists of those denominations participating in United Campus Ministry. Those responding were distributed as follows: United Methodists (36); United Presbyterian (10); United Church of Christ (5); and Disciples of Christ (1); 6 indicated "other" on the questionnaire although they had previously indicated a UCM-related denominational preference. Sex was evenly distributed with 28 males and 30 females. The average age was 22.1, which is 4.4 years younger than the average UNM students' age

of 26.5. Nearly 80% of our sample was 22 years of age and younger.

When asked to consider both creationism and evolution in relation to how much each has contributed to the origin and the development of human life, an overwhelming majority of students felt that creationism had been more responsible in its contribution than evolution. However, these same students attributed significantly more to evolution's contribution to the development vs the origin of human existence.

In addition to expressing a high degree of agreement with a number of traditional doctrinal statements, students also tend to be involved in organized church activities. For example, 54% said that they attend church once a week or more, and 63% said that during the last year they attended worship services two or more times per month. 61% said that they also enjoy working in other activities in their church.

Students also responded affirmatively to a number of other questions about religious beliefs. 68% said that religion is important to them because it answers many questions about the meaning of life; 63% said that they try hard to grow in understanding what it means to live as a child of God; 69% said that their religious beliefs lie behind their whole approach to life; 64% said that they frequently feel very close to God in prayer, during public worship or at important moments in their daily lives; 63% said they often experience the joy and peace which come from knowing that they are forgiven sinners; 51% said they try to find out what God wants them to do when they have to make decisions in everyday life; and 64 % said that they try hard to carry religion over into all their other dealings in life.

However, on one question, students did not respond positively. When facing decisions regarding social problems, students were asked how often they sought guidance from statements and publications provided by their church. 53% said "seldom or never," 22% said "occasionally," 17% said "fairly frequently," and only 8% said "regularly." We wondered why students affirm credal statements and participate in church activity, but do not seem to seek their church's guidance in regard to social problems.

Relation to Other Measures

In addition to being asked these and other questions about religion, students also completed four other separate survey inventories which provide comparative data with regard to their personal, social, and political attitudes. For example, we were able to determine that students who participate in overt religious activities, that is, attending services and organizational activities, also tend to score high on internal locus of control, i.e., they believe that they have control over their own lives rather than having their lives under the control of powerful other people,

luck, fate, or chance. No such relationship exists, however, for those whose religious expression is covert, that is, an emphasis on private prayer and internal religious ideation. Further, the covert religious group tends to demonstrate less personal despair in their lives than the overt religious group.

Dogmatism, Intolerance of Ambiguity, and Authoritarianism

For three other tests--dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, and authoritarianism--we were able to make comparisons with student responses to the religious items. Our major findings are as follows:

1. There is a positive correlation between strong religious belief and dogmatism. Students who tend to be very religious also tend to score more highly on the Dogmatism Scale designed by Milton Rokeach (1956). This scale was designed to measure individual differences in openness or closedness of belief system. On the basis of our data, it would seem that religious high-scorers also tend to be generally closed-minded, in Rokeach's definition.

2. Students who tend to be highly religious also tend to be high scorers on a scale designed to measure intolerance of ambiguity (Martin & Westie, 1959). According to this scale, high scorers tend to see things in black and white, to seek unambiguous solutions for complex problems, and to demonstrate rigid, categorical thinking.

3. Comparative analyses of scores of students who are highly religious also show a correlation with a scale designed to measure authoritarianism (Lane, 1955).

One should be cautious about drawing conclusions from this study because of a number of limitations of the research methodology. For instance, social desirability and acquiescent response sets confound student responses on these types of surveys. This is thought to be particularly true for young respondents. Further, religious individuals may be more sensitive and respon-

sive to these biases then their less religious counterparts. Additionally, the sample may not be representative of the population surveyed, as those not interested in religion and those more scholastically involved may not have participated due to the survey's nature and time of distribution respectively. This is not considered to significantly negate the findings, however, due to the comparatively large size of the sample. Lastly and very importantly, this study is correlational in nature, and does not imply causality.

Concluding Reflections

Reflecting on the major findings of the study, a number of things occur to us. By its very nature, higher education ought to foster open-mindedness, a tolerance for ambiguity, and non-authoritarianism--precisely those qualities that seem not to be characteristic of highly religious students. Thus, an issue that we need to address is: how compatible is higher education with conventional religious belief?

Second, by its very nature, campus ministry honors the integrity of the educational process and seeks to relate it positively to the Christian faith. In our understanding, faith and learning are not incompatible, but rather reinforce each other in increasingly larger understandings and horizons of both. Thus, campus ministry, in its context of higher education, may sometimes find itself in opposition to the conventional wisdom in relation to some of the dimensions that have been described in this study. We seek to be advocates for both the kind of education that fosters a liberating spirit, and a faith that encompasses questions as well as answers, and is open to truth wherever it may be found.

Third, what is the church's stake in all of this? The students in our sample are from main-line, liberal denominations, not fundamentalist or evangelical groups. What are implications for church programs of Christian education? Church folk might normally think it is a "good thing" for its young adults to adhere to strong religious belief. However, the results of this study show that this might be a mixed blessing. Are there ways the church can help people grow in their faith and at the same time remain open-minded to all of the complexities and wonder of God's creation? We hope and believe that this may be so.●